DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 416 720 FL 801 212

AUTHOR Grosz-Gluckman, Viviana
TITLE A Look at the Use of Electronic Mail (e-mail) as a Learning Tool in the Writing Skills of Adult LEP Female Students.
PUB DATE 1997-12-00
NOTE 47p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Students; Classroom Techniques; *Electronic Mail; *English (Second Language); Females; Higher Education; Instructional Effectiveness; *Limited English Speaking; Second Language Instruction; Skill Development; Teaching Methods; *Womens Education; *Writing Instruction; Writing Skills

ABSTRACT

This study examined the utility of electronic mail (e-mail) as an instructional tool for limited-English-proficient (LEP) adult females who have made little progress in learning writing in English as a Second Language (ESL). Six subjects, aged 30-50 years, enrolled in a university ESL program produced 25 e-mail exchanges with the research over a 5-week period. Subjects fell into two groups: those under age 40 with e-mail experience, and those aged 40-50 who were unfamiliar with e-mail. Analysis of the messages focused on number of messages, word counts, acquisition of new vocabulary directly related to comprehensible input, and syntactic complexity resulting from the use of connectors in the subordination of clauses. Results indicate that supervised e-mail had a positive effect on the writing skills of adult learners who have few opportunities to interact with target language speakers, and can be used as an effective extracurricular learning tool, particularly with older students. Appended materials include a brief subject questionnaire, summary of subjects' responses to it, letter of consent, and tables summarizing characteristics of the data and subordination and connectors in the data. Contains 32 references. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

FL

ED 416 720

A Look at the Use of Electronic Mail *(e-mail)* as a Learning Tool in the Writing Skills of Adult LEP Female Students

BY

VIVIANA GROSZ-GLUCKMAN

DECEMBER 1997

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Viviana Grosz-Gluckman

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

FL 801318

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract 4

The Problem 5

Importance of the Study 9

Research Question/Hypothesis 9

Limitations of the Study 10

Review of the Related Literature 13

Design and Methodology 19

Subjects 20

Materials 22

Procedure 23

Data Analysis and Findings 25

Conclusions 32

References 34

Appendix A: Blank Questionnaire 39

Appendix B: Chart of Subjects' Responses to the Eight Item Survey 40

Appendix C: Letter of Consent 42

Appendix D: Table 1 Characteristics of the Data 42

Appendix E: Table 2 Subordination and Connectors in the Data 45

Abstract

This study examines *e-mail* as an emerging instructional tool and its application as a resource for adult female learners who have shown little progress in their ESL writing skills. Six subjects, aged 30 to 50 years, in a college-level ESL Program produced 25 exchanges over a five-week period by direct correspondence with the researcher. Analysis of the data revealed that the subjects fell into two groups: (a) those under the age of 40 with *e-mail* experience and (b) those between the ages of 40 and 50, who were unfamiliar with this electronic medium. Examination of (a) the number of messages, (b) their length in terms of word counts, (c) the acquisition of new vocabulary directly related to the comprehensible input, and (d) the syntactical complexity that resulted from the use of connectors in the subordination of clauses showed progress in the subjects' writing skills. The results indicate that supervised *e-mail* has a positive effect on the writing skills of adult learners who have few opportunities to interact with target language speakers, and it can be used as an effective extracurricular learning tool, particularly with the older group of subjects.

The Problem

Within the college setting, the field of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) has been growing rapidly. Although its application has expanded across the English as a Second Language curriculum, little attention has been targeted, thus far, to the writing skills of adult females of limited English proficiency (LEP) between the ages of 30 and 50 years old. Similarly, a decade earlier, the additional use of tutorials and drills as a support and reinforcement system to classroom instruction (known as computer assisted instruction-CAI), failed to address the needs of this student population. For the most part, until now, these students have been largely considered in isolation as mothers and homemakers and not as a group of productive members of the society within the mainstream. Second language specialists have consistently focused their attention on younger groups. Consequently, priority has been given to attend to the language needs of LEP students of school age, as well as traditional college freshmen, probably with the belief that this population is the future and continuity of society, with better chances to integrate culturally and linguistically.

Generally, adult LEP students immigrate to the United States after they have completed their formal studies in their countries of origin, where some had held jobs. Upon their arrival to the host country, they dedicate their time to raising their families, working in the home or near it in jobs that require little command of the second language and are located within their immigrant neighborhoods. After having lived in

the United States for a considerable period of time without having fully developed their second language skills, these adult females return to school to advance in their professions, or acquire one, and formally study the second language. Whether having to seek better job opportunities or needing to be better prepared to compete in the workforce, they find themselves dividing their time between the demands of home and school and learning a second language.

As these women return to the classroom, they are confronted with the new and rapid influence and development of technology in the ESL field, with which they tend to be unfamiliar. Emphasis on communicative competence in second language acquisition and instruction has opened up computer networks to a new dimension in language education. The computer has become a medium for communication (Kern, 1996) without walls and geographic boundaries, where learners and teachers interact with each other, individually or in a group. Moreover, the accessibility of communication with native speakers in the target language and the access to "real audiences" (Hoffman, 1996, p. 55) that have authentic needs for information have made the use of computers for second language learning an enriching experience with multiple possibilities not yet fully exploited.

One of the most widespread computer applications for the development of process writing for teaching English composition and, by extension, English as a Second Language has been the use of the word processor, which became the primary writing tool in the computer writing lab (Phinney, 1996) during the last decade. The different steps in the writing process found a natural and accessible tool in the use of the computer's word processor that facilitated and expedited multiple text revisions, as well as the correction

of spelling, grammar and punctuation. The contemporary teaching and learning practices of group-oriented class work have given way to today's popular collaborative writing. Here, the emphasis is on "decentering authority" (p. 140) in the learning of writing with a tendency to include the writing instructor and other classmates as collaborators, in classrooms or on-line discussions, in the writing process by way of written comments to the text. Consequently, the process of writing a text often involves teacher, learner and peers alike.

Within the field of CALL, electronic pen pals and the electronic journal dialogue are techniques which have been successfully adapted from the traditional pen pal and journal dialogue and are currently being used in the writing classrooms to enhance the communicative mode of process writing. As recent studies show (Esling, 1991; Hass, 1989; Hoffman, 1996; Johnson, 1991; Levine, 1996; Phinney, 1991; Wang, 1996), the previously mentioned CALL interventions have centered their attention on the secondary level and traditional college-age student without taking into account the adult female learner as a group in itself within the LEP student population.

Similarly, no studies on the use of electronic mail or *e-mail*, to this researcher's knowledge, have been performed on the adult LEP female learner, and the existing studies, which focus on the younger LEP student, either examine psychological aspects of computer-mediated communication that include *e-mail* (Warschauer, 1996) or compare real with contrived uses of *e-mail* in the elementary classroom (Upitis, 1990). Neither, however, examines the influence of the electronic medium on the writing skills of the learner. The still recent introduction of electronic mail in the field of education may be the answer to the question of why no studies involving adult LEP female population have

been conducted. Nevertheless, because electronic mail has been gaining importance as a learning tool in second language instruction and has attracted the attention of educators in the field of ESL, discovery of its applications within the curriculum of teaching English as a Second Language is raising important issues regarding learning and instruction of the LEP student in general and has already opened unlimited venues yet to be explored.

Some of the characteristics of *e-mail* make it an ideal channel to help develop and practice writing skills, in particular for the adult female LEP learner. Because her language limitations confine her to work and expand her activities to the linguistic group with whom she identifies and communicates best, the electronic exchanges provide the adult female with the opportunity to interact with speakers of the target language in any geographic area, regardless of restrictions on time and space. Moreover, the faceless quality of *e-mail* gives her a sense of anonymity that allows her to communicate in writing with peers and teachers at her own pace, without feeling overpowered by more risk-taking students in the classroom setting. The unconventional language and style used in today's electronic exchanges permit freedom of expression to the language learner who may somehow feel restricted by her limited command of the target language. Likewise, the use of *e-mail* for communication allows her to explore in a spontaneous way and to experiment with the written word.

This study links the adult female learner who has had little progress in her ESL writing skills with the use of electronic mail as an emerging instructional resource in order to see what effect this medium could have on the writing skills of this student population.

Ultimately, the use of *e-mail* could be looked as a way to possibly complement the teaching of writing skills in the classroom.

Importance of the Study

Little or no research of which this investigator is aware examines the development of the writing skills of adult females, in a college setting, through electronic mail as a medium of communication. One possible explanation for this could be that this group of students is overshadowed in number by traditional learners who attend college soon after high school. Given the responsibilities at home and often of employment, the adult female LEP student is more likely to be enrolled in school on a part time basis, with little or no involvement in campus activities. This low representation makes these women less visible, and consequently whatever difficulties there may be during the process of acquiring and developing writing skills, they may often appear as individual problems and seldom be identified as that of a group. This study, therefore, attempts to address some of the problems found in these adult female learners as a group with common difficulties that have inhibited the development of their writing skills in the second language. By using a tool new to the instruction scene of English as a Second Language instruction as a resource for the improvement of writing skills of the LEP, the researcher hoped to understand how ESL instructors can help improve the writing skills of adult female students through the employment of electronic mail.

Research question/Hypothesis

This study was started with the following assumptions:

1. Some adult female LEP students returning to school to initiate or continue college-level studies and who show little progress in their written skills may not be fully integrated into the host society; consequently, they may not have sufficient opportunities to practice their writing skills outside the classroom.

2. Given some of the characteristics of electronic mail (use when convenient for students, among other things), employing this medium as a complement to classroom instruction may help improve the writing skills of the adult female LEP learner.

During the course of this study, specifically the data collection phase, two questions were raised:

1. Do adult female students with previous knowledge of electronic mail show a more rapid improvement in their English writing skills than those without *e-mail* experience?

2. Does personal contact with the adult female learner during the process of sending and receiving electronic mail messages stimulate the participant's writing production?

Limitations of the Study

There are four limitations to this study. The first one refers to the recruitment of the subjects who met the characteristics and requirements set forth for the study. In order to recruit subjects, the researcher sought the cooperation of the instructors in a college-level ESL Program, who responded promptly to the request; however, fewer than ten qualified possible students from the Program were identified and referred. This outcome indicates immediately some of the possible difficulties the researcher may face such as lack of time for becoming involved in an extracurricular activity that demanded a

five-week commitment, a reason given by some students for declining to participate in the study.

The second limitation refers to the restricted opportunities of the subjects to *e-mail* the researcher and the failure of some of the participants to fully comply with the required weekly *e-mail* to the researcher. The subjects were expected to *e-mail* once a week at the end of each of the five weeks, but did not have enough time to send electronic messages as they had previously agreed. Composing *e-mail* messages in English was particularly time consuming for these subjects, especially for those with little or no previous *e-mail* experience. Although all participants had at least one class in a computer language lab, there was little or no time to send electronic messages during a class, after ending it, or before going to the next one. Only one participant had *e-mail* connection outside the campus, yet she used it sporadically since she worked out of her home and was unable to *e-mail* during that time.

Next was the limited time for data collection. *e-mail* exchanges took place over a period of five weeks during which, as mentioned earlier, the participants were responsible for sending one *e-mail* per week, but Phinney (1991), for instance, indicates that six to eight weeks may not be sufficient time to change the writing behavior of students when being introduced to a new writing tool.

The last to be mentioned was the limitation regarding some students' un-familiarity with current modern technology. Time spent on getting acquainted with the operational and technical aspects of electronic mail took time away from the writing per se; and fear of losing the text on the screen prevented subjects in some cases from concentrating on writing the message. In a study about learning to use technology,

Russell (1996) identified six stages adults may go through as they learn to use *e-mail*: (a) awareness, (b) learning the process, (c) understanding and application of the process, (d) familiarity and confidence, (e) adaptation to other contexts, (f) and creative application to new contexts. Although Russell does not mention the average approximate time it takes to master a stage before passing to the next one, it is reasonable to suppose that the participants in this study who lacked previous *e-mail* experience had not had enough time to undergo all six stages Russell claims it takes to learn to use *e-mail*. It is possible that some of the participants had not quite reached the "familiarity and confidence" stage, or when they reached it, it was towards the end of the study resulting in the limited *e-mail* production (length of messages for some, number of messages for others) for some of the subjects.

In addition to this last limitation, some consideration, which could be explored in further studies, must be given to the fact that not all learners are suited for using CALL materials (Chapelle & Jamieson, 1986; Chapelle, Jamieson & Park, 1996).

Review of the Related Literature

This study is based upon two theoretical foundations of second language acquisition (SLA): acculturation and comprehensible input. Schumann (1981) states that "SLA is just one aspect of acculturation and that the degree to which a learner acculturates to the target language group will control the degree to which he acquires the second language." He refers to acculturation as "the social and psychological integration of the learner with the target language" (p. 34). However, while this may be accepted as one of several definitions for acculturation, perhaps the most comprehensive one explains the term as

> the process by which an immigrant or an immigrant group absorbs the cultural behavior patterns of a new culture. During th[is] process ... the individual shares the values of the new society, but to a very considerable extent maintains his own identity (Baldassini, 1995, p. 111).

The acculturation process can be studied from a theoretical or an experimental point of view (p. 114). There are two aspects to the experimental process of acculturation: the internal one refers to the values and beliefs that people share in a given culture, while the external is concerned with "how the immigrant behaves in relation to the use of language, selection of food, readings, television, music, leisure time," etc. (p. 116). Adaptation in the acculturation process may take the form of adjusting some of the immigrant's customs in order to reduce conflict between the newcomer and the host culture (Garcia-Vazquez, 1995). Language is one major change that will often determine the integration of the immigrant into the host society, and how the LEP learner acquires

and develops it will influence how he participates in the new culture. Certain studies suggest that some adults may resist integration into the main culture for fear of losing their personal identity (Brilliant, Lvovich & Markson, 1995; McLaughlin, 1985). When this occurs, it affects, in particular, how the individual acquires the second language. The age of the learner may pose an additional barrier in the language acquisition process (Collier, 1995); and acquiring a second language later than learners acquire first language may be one of the "most obvious potential explanations for the comparative lack of success" of the adult LEP (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, p. 153). For instance, a recent study on how Schumann's acculturation model affects second language acquisition indicated that the age of arrival to the host country and the stage of acculturation of the adult LEP correlated with the degree of the learner's accent or native-like phonation (Hansen, 1995).

The experimental or "practical" way of looking at the acculturation process makes use of a tool, usually a questionnaire, that will help the researcher determine the immigrant's degree of acculturation, or "level of acceptance of the new culture" (Baldassini, 1995, p. 114). In order to assess the "learners' characteristics, attitudes and opinions" (Turner, 1993, p. 736), second language researchers have adapted the Likert-scale questionnaires that were originally developed for the behavioral sciences with psychometric purposes (Busch, 1993). In spite of their frequent and widespread use in the second language academic community, Likert-scale questionnaires present one problem that pertains exclusively to cultural differences when assessing LEP learners. Often, the respondents to a survey belong to different cultural groups, and when it comes to answering, "some might be more likely than others [to offer responses to] what they think the researcher wants to hear" (Turner, 1993, p. 737). Conversely, surveys with

open-ended questions that allow respondents the freedom to express their "attitudes and opinions" (p. 737) may result in more accurate and open information.

The adult LEP who has achieved an intermediate level in SLA has gained relative command of the preliminary skills of language learning: listening, reading, and speaking; her approach to writing is very similar to that of writing in her first language. Nevertheless, her lack of sufficient vocabulary and syntax due in part to her limited exposure to the printed word that comes from reading and being read to at an early age account for limitations in her writing skills (Peregoy and Boyle, 1993).

The second theoretical foundation of this study is based on Krashen's concept of writing as output that requires comprehensible input (1981,1983). Comprehensible input that is one step beyond the learner's ability must be meaningful, functional and with a purpose to allow for writing (output) to occur. Writing, as all other language skills, will improve with practice, which in turn develops fluency, that is, "the ability to get words down on a page easily" and automaticity, "the ability to engage in a complex activity without having to concentrate in each part of it" (Peregoy and Boyle, 1993, p. 84). The adult learner will benefit from opportunities to write that are particularly meaningful, functional and with a purpose.

One of the popular ways adopted in ESL teaching to help develop fluency and automaticity has been the use of journal writing. In general, journal writing has been regarded as a non-threatening way for the LEP learner to write about personal experiences, thoughts and feelings. Journal writing, particularly journal dialogues where the teacher writes a comment or response to the student's entry, develops a sort of conversation on paper between instructor and learner (Wang, 1996). The development of technology and the wider use of computers in the classroom and in the home "[have]

created opportunities to take dialogue journal one step further through use of *e-mail*" (p. 767). Without taking away from the original characteristics of journal dialogue, the electronic medium has provided an environment in which the adult LEP student can practice and develop writing skills with no restraints of time and space.

Electronic mail "is a way of sending a message from one computer to one or more other computers around the world" (Warschauer, 1995, p. 5); it performs the same task as postal mail but at a much faster speed and transcends physical distance (Tao, 1995). *e-mail* can be asynchronous: the sender of a message does not require the presence of the receiver at the other end of the computer in order to establish communication. Or it can be synchronous: real time interaction occurs on a one to one basis, or between multiple partners. This study is concerned with asynchronous or delayed *e-mail*.

While there are more studies in second language instruction on synchronous *e-mail* using collaborative writing, word processing and electronic pen pals (Esling, 1991; Hass, 1989; Hoffman, 1996; Johnson, 1991; Kern, 1996; Levine, 1996; Phinney, 1991, 1996; Wang, 1996), there is little or no research that documents the use of electronic mail with adult LEP female learners. No qualitative data has been collected that will explain the effect of *e-mail* on gender (Hawisher & Moran, 1993; Tao, 1995), and the age factor "remains virtually unexplored in *e-mail* communications in educational settings" (Tao, 1995, p. 32).

Following are some of the characteristics of electronic mail that directly relate to the adult female LEP learner:

1. The asynchronous quality of *e-mail*, which transcends time and space (Hawisher & Moran, 1993; Hoffman, 1996), allows the learner to practice writing by composing a message or responding to one at the sender/receiver's convenience without

the interference of home or work responsibilities. In addition, the sender/receiver does not have to be present at a particular time for written communication to occur.

2. Absence of face to face communication or "face-saving" (Hoffman, 1996, p. 65) may give the false impression of anonymity or depersonalization that may allow the learner to express more freely, without inhibitions, while developing proficiency (1996; Tao, 1995). The absence of paralinguistic cues (Hawischer & Moran, 1993) such as voice tone eliminates the possible embarrassment that may result when the learner has a heavy accent and has difficulties being understood when communicating orally. The false sense of anonymity (1993) may also be responsible for what Hoffman (1996) calls "warm" communication or a more conversational style that makes it easier for the student to ask questions, which Hawisher and Moran (1993) see as an opportunity for more contact between students and teachers. It is important to mention, however, that absence of non-verbal language (facial expressions or body language, for example) may pose a disadvantage for the learner who may infer and/or communicate meaning nonverbally when the written word becomes too difficult or fails to communicate the intended meaning.

3. Although researchers have pointed out that there is a need for structure and a set of conventions for writing electronic messages (1993; Tao, 1995), the lack of them may be the kind of flexibility that may help some of the adult LEP females to initiate or carry out written communication.

Below follow some of the reasons why electronic mail can help the writing skills in particular of the adult female LEP learner:

1. Electronic mail can be a source for comprehensible input linking the adult language learner with speakers of the target language even when the student has few

opportunities for personal contact with native speakers (Pennington, 1996). Exposure to authentic language, therefore, will help the student who does not utilize the second language outside the classroom generate meaningful and functional messages (Hoffman, 1996).

2. The delayed communication of the asynchronous *e-mail* gives the learner time to reflect on the message received, to develop ideas, and to express them "as clearly as possible in [the] replies" (p. 63).

3. The adult LEP female student whose slow progress may be a cause for embarrassment in a classroom setting and consequently is shy to participate openly in group activities during class instruction may be motivated to take risks in the second language by using electronic mail as a communicative medium (1996).

4. The speed and ease of the electronic transmission of a composed message may give the feeling for a quick response (Hawisher & Moran, 1993) to the adult LEP female that needs comprehensible input, stimulating her writing (output). This "rapid turnaround" (p. 632) may create a sense of expectation in the adult female learner, which can motivate her to generate more output that is meaningful and with a purpose. Nonetheless, it is important to mention that the demand for too "quick [a] response" (p. 632) may bring about anxiety and apprehension in the student, which may create a negative feeling in some cases (Beauvois, 1995).

Design and Methodology

Consistent with the qualitative methodology of ethnographic studies, the approach to this descriptive study included personal interviews, the administration of survey questionnaires and analysis of data gathered through uncontrolled submission. The findings resulting from the analysis of the data will help to possibly reach conclusions that will relate exclusively to the population sample of this study and therefore will not be generalizable (Larsen-Freeman, 1991).

In light of recent studies on computer-assisted language learning with limited English proficiency population, this longitudinal study was designed to examine the effects of electronic mail on the writing skills of ten adult female students of low to moderate levels of acculturation enrolled in an ESL program at an institution of higher learning. Based on instructors' student evaluations and the final test scores, the students selected for the study had demonstrated little progress in their earlier language courses and were expected to show some development in their writing skills at the conclusion of the project.

The researcher engaged the participants in weekly electronic exchanges that served as the data for the study. Because the messages gathered were generated outside the confines of the traditional classroom, at the leisure of the participants and without being subject to the scrutiny of the course instructor that would grade their writing and check for grammatical mistakes, it was expected to conclude, after analysis of these data, that *e-mail* could serve as a resource for improving the writing skills of adult female

learners and a complement to the core curriculum of a language program for the LEP student.

In order to determine each participant's level of adaptation to the host culture, an eight item survey questionnaire would be administered at the beginning of the study. A second questionnaire with open-ended questions was expected to be given in the final week of the data collection to help detect major changes that had occurred since the first survey was administered. After the initial interview with the participants, weekly group meetings were to take place to maintain rapport between the researcher and the subjects. These informal gatherings were to offer the opportunity to practice conversational skills, and, in addition, they would give insight with respect to the *e-mail* experience of the adult learners and its impact on their writing skills. As a way to maintain the subjects' interest in the study and acknowledge their cooperation, books of related language topics were to be distributed to the participants at the conclusion of the study.

The collection of data took place over a period of five weeks, with spontaneous written messages generated without the peer/instructor pressure of the classroom environment and with very few subjects.

Subjects

The subjects were selected from an ESL program situated in the Department of English of a university that prepares second language speakers for their academic studies in a regular degree program and who may be enrolled in regular courses while in the language program. The subjects had completed high school or its equivalent and

had been tested as all second language speaking students are, whether freshmen or transfers, in order to be placed at the appropriate language skill level.

The courses in the ESL Program fall into three categories: core level, reading/ vocabulary enrichment, and oral skills. Based on the results of a written essay, a reading test, and an oral interview, the participants in this study were enrolled in the ESL core courses of levels three and four, equivalent to Intermediate Writing Levels I and II respectively, and had shown, according to their performance in their course work and at the end of it, little progress. In some cases the subjects were repeating the course for a second time. The six students that participated in this study were, for all but one, Spanish speakers, the other being an Italian speaker, ranging from ages 30 to 50 years old except for one student who was 21 years of age. This student was allowed to remain in the group since the researcher reasoned that her participation might be useful to point out differences and similarities between her and the older subjects.

All the time of the study, all participants had resided in the United States for a minimum of five to seven years, a time during which the initial stages of acculturation would have likely been overcome. All the subjects divided their time between school, home and family obligations, and, in most cases, full or part time employment as well. In view of the fact that three of the older participants in the study had not had any previous experience with the use of electronic mail, the researcher gave one basic training session at the ESL computer laboratory facility of the University, a fully equipped multi-media classroom with access to e-*mail* and Internet, before the actual exchanges began. Further assistance was made available at the computer laboratory from which the subjects sent and received *e-mail*. The rest of the subjects, who were more familiarized

with electronic correspondence and who had *e-mail* connection outside the school environment, were not restricted to the University's facility.

Materials

The study included use of a questionnaire to identify the level of acculturation of the adult female subjects when the study began. This tool is the researcher's modification of an instrument adapted by Baldassini, 1980 (see Appendix A). The questionnaire consists of eight questions in English designed to give an indication of the external aspect of the experimental or practical process of acculturation. Thus, the questions related exclusively to the use and preference of language spoken at home and outside of it and the type of language in which entertainment was chosen during the subjects' free time. The researcher read the questions to the subjects individually in English; she then recorded each answer in a chart (see Appendix B) to show the pattern of language use and predilection according to a continuum that went from using "native language all the time" to "English only." A second questionnaire with five open-ended questions, also in English, was developed for administration during the final week of the data collection (see Appendix A). Due to difficulties with time restrictions and availability of the participants (see Limitations), this questionnaire was also administered at the beginning of the study. The questions in the second survey paraphrased some of the questions in the first one. They were also read to the subjects and their responses recorded individually; the purpose of these open-ended questions was to verify and confirm the subjects' first answers. Validity for both questionnaires was established by having a third party, a college professor in the ESL field, evaluate the questions.

After analyzing the data, the researcher obtained the subjects' "first day writing sample" from the beginning of the course and the "final essay" written at the conclusion of the semester in order to help establish conclusions. In the three instances where the first day sample was unavailable to the researcher, copies of the final writing samples for the previous language course level were used.

Procedure

The researcher sent letters to the instructors in the ESL language program requesting referrals for subjects enrolled in writing course levels three and four who qualified for the study according to the guidelines previously described. The researcher interviewed all eight students initially recommended for possible participation. She explained that participation in the study consisted of writing a minimum of one *e-mail* weekly to the researcher for a period of five weeks. One student who met all the qualifications did not want to partake in the study due to lack of time and the demands of school work and home. A second student who agreed to be part of the study never engaged in the electronic exchanges and was therefore dropped.

The six students that agreed to maintain a weekly electronic correspondence during the period set by the researcher signed written consent forms (see Appendix C) that informed them about the nature of the study, gave them assurances of reasonable confidentiality with respect to the contents of the *e-mail* exchanges, and stated that their participation in the study did not bear any relation to the final grades in their courses. The subjects were cautioned orally about the lack of privacy when using electronic mail as a communication tool and were therefore asked to refrain from writing material that

might be considered personal or sensitive. The questionnaire and open-ended questions were administered.

The participants, who were enrolled in four different writing sections at the University, met with the researcher between classes, usually at the computer language lab, where they would check and send their *e-mail* and where the training session for the three inexperienced subjects took place.

The researcher opened *e-mail* accounts for the subjects and initiated the first *e-mail* exchange on a one to one basis with each participant. There were no set topics, and the subjects were free and welcome to ask questions, write about school concerns, countries of origin, interests, etc. Weekly messages were responded to immediately; and when no message had been received in a week, the researcher e-mailed again. If there continued to be no response, the researcher made an informal visit to the student, usually at the language lab. This contact and accompanying words of encouragement were followed, in some instances, by a message, as in the case of one subject, which will be discussed in the Findings; these replaced the weekly meetings that were expected to allow for conversation practice and feedback about the *e-mail* experience but did not take place due to scheduling difficulties with the participants. The exchanges were carried out over a period of five weeks, and a total of 25 messages were generated by the subjects during that time.

Data Analysis and Findings

Data analysis followed a certain approach. The researcher examined changes in the subjects' writings, whether of function or form, that may have resulted from the students' participation in this electronic mail experience. The changes observed related to word counts of each message (length of message); incorporation of vocabulary from the researcher's *e-mail* into the learners' messages; replies to the researcher's questions and/or comments and the asking questions in return; and sentence structure, with respect to the learners' usage of connectors to subordinate one clause to another.

Table 1 (see Table D1) shows the subjects divided into two groups: those without *e-mail* experience and those who had some experience previous to their participation in the study. *e-mail* experience consists of familiarity with electronic mail writing procedures, such as filling out the subject line before proceeding to the body of the message and using hello as a salutation rather than the traditional epistolary dear. The number of messages sent by each participant is listed, along with the number of words in each message, to show progression in the quantity of the output. Within the group that had *e-mail* experience, subject S6, listed at the end of Table D1, was the only participant who posed questions in her messages to the researcher. This possibly indicates that the learner felt comfortable corresponding with the researcher, suggesting, also, that the distance that often exits in a student/teacher relationship had been eliminated in the electronic correspondence between this subject and the investigator.

There were three findings general to all subjects. First, all participants increased production of output towards the end of the study (see Table D1) with the exception of one learner, subject S1, who failed to acquire basic knowledge about the use of

electronic mail during the course of the study and therefore was unable to interact with the researcher through this medium. The case of subject S1 illustrates one of an adult female who requires time to acquire relative proficiency using technology before being able to engage in and benefit from electronic written communication. Nevertheless, in this subject's *e-mail*, written under the researcher's supervision during the training, one may observe three important signs of progress and overall potential benefit in her writing skills: (a) excitement to be part of the study ("I'm glad receive your e-mail"); (b) incorporation of new vocabulary ("because, this project is new for me"), and (c) acknowledging comprehension of researcher's message, who had given some background about herself, when the subject volunteered information: ("I'm born in El Salvador").

The second finding was that the messages from the researcher proved to be comprehensible input that successfully engaged the subjects in written communication. All the subjects reacted to the researcher's messages by responding to her questions. "What did you use to do in Colombia? Are you working now?". One subject wrote:

> Hello . . . I am going to try to answer you. In Colombia I used to try to work with Inmigration [sic]. I work at the airport for ten years. At the present moment I am not working. I have two boys. One is two and the other one year old. Now you can imagin [sic] how difficult it is for me to have time.

Another subject volunteered information that was prompted by a researcher's comment:

> I also have a 12 year old, . . . she is my youngest, keeping me on my toes. My son is going to be 20 years old on Saturday and my second daughter is 18, about to graduate from high school.

And wrote the following: " . . . thanks for tell me about your family. I want to tell you about my husband, I had meet him in America . . . "

Third, there was the incorporation of new vocabulary. Subject S1 and subject S5 included, respectively, words like project and questionnaire in their replies, which were contained in the messages the researcher previously sent to each of them. One may infer that this quick inclusion of new vocabulary into the replied messages shows eagerness to acquire, practice and therefore retain new material.

Some differences were observed between the two groups: students with previous *e-mail* knowledge and/or experience and students without *e-mail* background. The experienced learners were younger than the other participants and produced on the average fewer messages than the second group. They were constantly concerned about lack of time for e-mailing ("Sorry, but I cannot write, because I have to go . . . "), resulting in what seemed to be hurried replies to the researcher's questions and/or comments. This pattern is also evident in messages where missing words appeared not to be the result of vocabulary deficiency, but rather due to rapidly composed messages, as can be noticed in the following example: "I do not [know] yet what are we doing." These subjects appeared to be uninterested in maintaining electronic communication with the researcher.

Conversely, the participants with no experience in the use of electronic mail were excited to be part of the study. From their initial messages to the researcher, two points were evident. First, the learners regarded their participation in the study as an opportunity for learning to use electronic mail ("I am glade [sic] that we meet and i [sic] have the opportunity to send you this message . . . "); second, they understood that engaging in electronic exchanges with the researcher would allow them to practice their

writing skills (" . . . It is a pleasure work with you, because I have the opportunity to learn more . . . ").

These participants had to divide the focus of their attention between learning the technical aspects of the writing tool and concentrating on the act of writing a message. Table D1 shows a trend of increased production (length of the message) for all the subjects. However, it must be mentioned that for the learners who had to learn to use technology, composing a message represented a parallel effort which the learners able to engage in written communication from the start of the project did not experience. It may be reasonable to assume, as a result, that the general progress observed may have been more relevant for subjects with no previous *e-mail* experience than for the younger experienced group.

Among the different options taken into account to examine changes in the sentence structure of the subjects' electronic messages, consideration was given to comparing each of the subjects' texts with those of the researcher's to see if the learners' sentence structure had been somehow modified by the comprehensible input received during the exchanges. Equal attempts were made to compare standard English sentence structure to that of the learners and to record any differences observed. Similarly, the students' final class writing samples were compared against the different *e-mail* entries they produced to see if there was an indication that the sentence structure in their written material had undergone any modification as a result of the electronic interaction. No noticeable changes were observed in the subjects' sentence structure that would suggest a movement towards standardization due to the *e-mail* experience. This observation doesn't necessarily suggest that such changes could not have taken

place; it only indicates that due to the study's limitations there was not sufficient time to produce more data that would show an evident progression towards standardization.

Consequently, and in another effort to see if some syntactical changes had occurred during the electronic interaction, the subjects' use of connectors to introduce sentences was added to Table 2 (see Table E2) to show the use of subordination and thus an increase in syntactical complexity in the progression of the *e-mail* exchanges. As Table E2 shows, a tendency toward increased subordination is evident towards the end of the study general to all subjects, with the exception again of subject S1, whose only successful *e-mail* was sent under technical supervision. In contrast to the others increased usage of subordinated clauses in their electronic messages, subject S1's first *e-mail* composed during the training session at the computer lab contains a dependent clause introduced by the connector <u>because</u> ("I'm glad receive your *e-mail* because, this project is new to me"), followed in the second exchange by an independent sentence ("I'm born in El Salvador") and a fragment of another sentence ("na [sic] for your message"), which in a way may already be announcing the total failure of the third and last message sent without assistance, ("I'am turbo@_____.edu"). The case of subject S1 may indicate a decrease in the production of more electronic exchanges like the first one due to the inability to overcome technical barriers during the time of the study. It is possible that once she learns the rudiments of technology, she may be able to compose longer and more syntactically complex sentences as in the first *e-mail*.

One main difference between the two groups was the choice of connectors. The older and less experienced group used <u>because</u>, as seen with subject S1, and <u>so</u> and <u>that</u>. In the case of subject S2, for example, one may observe the increase of subordinated sentences introduced by connectors from one dependent sentence

composed during the training session ("I am glade [sic] that we meet") to three in each of the last two *e-mail* messages written towards the end of the study. As Table E2 shows, subject S2 produced three subordinated sentences in message four ("so I have the time to writing, . . . becouse [sic] last week was not enough time, . . . bicouse [sic] shi [sic] is weiting [sic] for this since last week") and three more clauses in her last *e-mail* ("that even from a family shedule [sic] . . . you have take the time . . . , . . . becouse [sic] they feel that this way is more appilling [sic] . . . "), indicating that authentic written communication had been established and was in progress. Subject S3 also introduces the subordinated sentence in her first *e-mail* ("because I have the opportunity . . . "); she later switches to the connector so in her last exchange ("I am writing to you after the ESL exam, so I am worried about it"), where she probably could have used because. Although the choice of so may be wrong in this case, it shows awareness of connectors other than because and possibly an attempt to display a higher, more sophisticated level in her writing ability. As shown, the older group utilizes a basic, more elemental level of subordination than the younger and more experienced group, who, in addition to the two aforementioned connectors, used how, as, what, when, since ("how difficult it is for me . . . , how long you are planning . . . , as you told me . . . , what you said . . . , what are we doing . . . , when I am 15 years old . . . , seen [clearly meaning since] is one for week . . . "). The variety of connectors by the younger group may suggest a slightly richer complexity than the one observed in the older one.

Common to both groups was the presence of subordination introduced by an adverbial, as in subject S4's "after I put them in bed . . . ", subject S5's "after, my family and I moved to United States . . . ", and subject S2's before I send along messages . . . "; and dependent clauses preceded by I hope as in subject S6's "I hope we can be friend

[sic] by mail . . . ", subject S2's "I hope today there is time . . . ", and subject S3's "I hope you will receive this leter [sic] . . . ", "I hope I pass this exam . . . ", "I hope you will have a great vacations [sic] . . . ", and " I hope I will see you around some time . . . "

Although one may be able to infer a certain progression towards more complex sentence structure through the subjects' use of connectors, the limited amount of time in which the study took place makes it difficult for one to conclude that there has, indeed, been syntactic progress. Instead, it would be more accurate to indicate that, based on the above, syntactic structure changes may be possible during a prolonged *e-mail* exchange. However, in order to prove that, learners would have to reach a comfortable level using electronic mail, and necessary studies would cover at least an entire semester.

Conclusions

Analysis of the data revealed that the subjects in this study fell into two categories: a younger group of learners under the age of 40 with electronic mail experience and an older group between the ages of 40 and 50 who were not familiar with the electronic medium. Progress in the writing skills of the subjects was judged by examining (a) the number of their messages, (b) their length in terms of word counts, (c) the acquisition of new vocabulary directly related to the comprehensible input, and (d) the syntactical complexity that resulted from the use of connectors in the subordination of clauses.

The subjects reacted to the comprehensible input of the researcher's electronic messages and established a true exchange of written communication by asking for information in some cases and volunteering it in others. Although all the subjects who used the electronic medium successfully increased their output towards the end of the study, overall, progress was more relevant to the older subjects since their participation in the study represented a double effort. They had to focus their attention on improving their writing skills and on learning to use electronic mail as well.

Incorporation of new vocabulary into some of the subjects' messages reflected an eagerness to acquire material and an excitement about applying it to real, functional communication with a purpose. The variety of connectors that the younger subjects used in the subordinated clauses represents a slightly more complex syntax than that of the older group who, however, wrote more messages.

Recruitment of the subjects and the opportunities to *e-mail* the researcher hindered the study. However, the restricted window for collecting data and some subjects' unfamiliarity with electronic mail were, in the researcher's view, the main

limitations of this study. Consequently, the findings, more than being conclusive, have shown that supervised *e-mail* exchanges have had an undeniable positive effect on the writing skills of the adult female learners, particularly of the older students, who have not yet been fully integrated into the host culture. And they have shown too that there is probably room for similar but more extended studies that will cover a semester or two and render more data for analysis.

If indeed "the best way for the researcher to assess whether input is comprehensible for an individual learner is to observe how the learner responds to it" (Chapelle, Jamieson & Park, 1996, p. 46), then the use of electronic mail as a resource outside classroom instruction is today an effective learning tool for the female learner. *e-mail* makes the practice of writing skills available any place and anytime, particularly for the older student with fewer opportunities to interact with target language speakers. Its still unconventional language format gives the female learner the freedom to react to comprehensible input with spontaneity.

Analysis of the writing skills of LEP learners through *e-mail* exchanges is only one aspect of SLA that can improve when using this type of technology. *e-mail*, therefore, as an emerging tool for second language learning, offers a variety of possibilities for the study of other language skills in SLA.

References

Baldassini, J. G. (1995). Children of many cultures: Theoretical and practical study of the process of acculturation. Union, NJ: Instruction, Curriculum and Administration Department, Kean University.

Beauvois, M. H. (1995). E-talk: attitudes and motivation in computer-assisted classroom discussion. Computers and the Humanities, 28, 177-190.

Brilliant, J. J., Lvovich, N. & Markson, S. J. (1995). The effect of the affect: Psychological factors in adult ESL student language performance. College ESL, 5 (1), 52-60.

Busch, M. (1993). Using Likert scales in L2 research: A researcher comments. TESOL Quarterly, 27 (4), 733-735.

Chapelle, C. & Jamieson, J. (1986). Computer-assisted language learning as a predictor of success in acquiring English as a second language. TESOL Quarterly, 20 (1), 27-46.

Chapelle, C., Jamieson, J. & Park, Y. (1996). Second language classroom research traditions: How does CALL fit? In M. Pennington (Ed.), The power of CALL (pp. 33-53). Houston, TX: Athelstan.

Collier, V. P. (1995). Promoting academic success for ESL students: Understanding second language acquisition for school. Jersey City, NJ: New Jersey Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages-Bilingual Educators.

Esling, J.H. (1991). Researching the effects of networking: Evaluating the spoken and written discourse generated by working with CALL. In P. Dunkel (Ed.), Computer-

assisted language learning and testing: Research issues and practices (pp. 111-130). New York: NewburyHouse:HarperCollins.

Garcia-Vazquez, E. (1995). Acculturation and academics: Effects of acculturation on reading achievement among Mexican-American students. The Bilingual Research Journal, 19 (2), 305-315.

Haas, C. (1989). How the writing medium shapes the writing process: Effects of word processing on planning. Research in the Teaching of English, 23 (2), 181-207.

Hansen, D. (1995). A study of the effect of the acculturation model on second language acquisition. In F.R. Eckman, D. Highland, P.W. Lee, J. Mileham & R. R. Weber (Eds.), Second language acquisition theory and pedagogy (pp. 305-316). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Hawisher, G.E., & Moran, Ch. (1993). Electronic mail and the writing instructor. College English, 55 (6), 627-643.

Hoffman, R. (1996). Computer networks: Webs of communication for language teaching. In M. Pennington (Ed.), The power of CALL (pp. 55-78). Houston, TX: Athelstan.

Johnson, D.M. (1991). Second language and content learning with computers: Research in the role of social factors. In P. Dunkel (Ed.), Computer-assisted language learning and testing: Research Issues and practice (pp. 61-83). New York, NY: NewburyHouse:HarperCollins.

Kern, R. (1996). Computer-mediated communication: Using *e-mail* exchanges to explore personal histories in two cultures. In M. Warschauer (Ed.), Telecollaboration in foreign language learning: Proceedings of the Hawai'i symposium. (Technical Report

#12) (pp.105-119). Honolulu, Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i, Second Language Teaching & Curriculum Center.

Krashen, S. D. (1981). Second language acquisition and second language learning. Oxford, England: Pergamon Press, Ltd.

Krashen, S. D. & Terrell, T. D., (1983). The natural approach: Language acquisition in the classroom. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Regents:Prentice Hall.

Larsen-Freeman, D. & Long, M. H. (1991). An introduction to second language acquisition research. New York, NY: Longman.

Levine, T. & Zellermayer, M. (1996). Student perceptions of classroom climate in a communicative and computer-supported approach to writing instruction. Journal of Research and Development in Education, 29 (2), 94-103.

McLaughlin, B. (1985). Second language acquisition in childhood: School-age children, 2. (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Pennington, M. (1996). The power of the computer in language education. In M. Pennington (Ed.), The power of CALL (pp.1-13). Houston, TX: Athelstan.

Peregoy, S. F. & Boyle, O. F. (1993). Reading, writing, and learning in ESL: A resource book for K-8 teachers. White Plains, NY: Longman.

Phinney, M. (1991). Computer-assisted writing and writing apprehension in ESL students. In P. Dunkel (Ed.), Computer-assisted language learning and testing (pp.189-204). New York, NY: NewburyHouse:HarperCollins.

Phinney, M. (1996). Exploring the virtual world: Computers in the second language writing classroom. In M. Pennington (Ed.), The power of CALL (pp.137-152). Houston, TX: Athelstan.

Russell, A. L. (1996). Six stages for learning to use technology. Proceedings of Selected Research and Development Presentations at the 1996 National Convention of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 397 832).

Schumann, J. H. (1981). The acculturation model for second language acquisition. In Gingras, R. C. (Ed.), Second language acquisition and foreign language teaching. (2nd ed.). Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Tao, L. (1995). What do we know about *e-mail*: An existing and emerging literacy vehicle? Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Reading Conference, New Orleans, LA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 399 530).

Turner, J. (1993). Another researcher comments. TESOL Quarterly, 27 (4), 736-739.

Upitis, R. (1990). Real and contrived uses of electronic mail in elementary schools. Computers and Education, 15 (1-3), 233-243.

Wang, Y. (1996). *e-mail* dialogue journaling in an ESL reading and writing classroom. Proceedings of Selected Research and Development Presentations at the 1996 National Convention of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 397 845).

Warschauer, M. (1995). *e-mail* for English teaching: Bringing the Internet and computer learning networks into the language classroom. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.

Warschauer, M. (1996). Motivational aspects of using computers for writing and communication. In M.Warschauer (Ed.), Telecollaboration in foreign language learning:

Proceedings of the Hawai'i symposium. (Technical Report #12) (pp. 29-46). Honolulu, Hawai'i: Second Language Teaching & Curriculum Center, University of Hawai'i.

Blank Questionnaire (eight-item survey and five open-ended questions)

"ENCUENTRO"
Miami University

J. Szapocznik, Ph.D.
Adapted by J.G. Baldassini
Modified by Viviana Grosz-Gluckman

Name: _____
Date of Birth: _____ Sex: _____ Pre/Post

Instructions: In the following questions please mark an X in the column that applies to you.

	Native Language all the time	Native Language most of the time	Native Language & English equally	English most of the time	English all of the time
Which language do you prefer to speak?					
What language do you speak at home?					
What language do you speak in school?					
What language do you speak at work?					
What language do you speak with friends?					
In what language are the T.V. programs you watch?					
In what language are the radio stations you listen to?					
In what language are the books and magazines you read?					

Instructions: Please answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

1.- What language do you speak when you call the telephone company?

_____

_____

2.- What language do you speak when you order airplane tickets by telephone?

_____

_____

3.- In what language are the movies you rent at the video store?

_____

_____

4.- Where do you shop for groceries?

_____

_____

5.- What do you like to do in your free time?

_____

_____

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix B

Chart of Subjects' Responses to the Eight-Item Survey

	Native Language all the time	Native Language most of the time	Native Language & English equally	English most of the time	English all of the time
Which language do you prefer to speak?		3		1	2
What language do you speak at home?	3	1	1		1
What language do you speak in school?			3	2	1
What language do you speak at work?		2		1	1
What language do you speak with friends?		4	1		1
In what language are the T.V. programs you watch?			3		3
In what language are the radio stations you listen to?			2	2	2
In what language are the books and magazines you read?	1	3	1		1

Appendix C

Letter of Consent

I agree to participate in the study Viviana Grosz-Gluckman is doing for her Masters in TESL.

I give my permission for Viviana to save and examine the electronic messages (*e-mail*) I will exchange with her.

I understand that the contents of the electronic messages I send to Viviana will be kept reasonably confidential. Only someone directly connected to this study will be allowed to see the messages .

I understand I can *e-mail* to Viviana as often as I want, but I agree to *e-mail* to her at least once a week.

I agree to meet with Viviana and the other participants in the study for a weekly hour of conversation practice while discussing the *e-mail* experience.

I understand that my participation in this study will not affect my grade in my ESL class.

I have agreed to participate in this study of my own free will.

NOTE: Review of this form will include discussion about the lack of privacy in *e-mail*

SIGNED: _____

PRINT NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Appendix D

Table 1

Characteristics of the Data

Subject	*e-mail* Exp.[a]	Descript[b]	Messages 1	2	3
S1	No	Words	12	9	Technical failure, no further messages
		Notes	New vocabulary project	Response to comprehensible input. Adds new information.	---
S2	No	Words	36	26	23
		Notes	Expects reply	Acknowledges need for practice	No comment
S3	No	Words	19	21	53
		Notes	Sees *e-mail* as an opportunity to learn	Apologizes for not responding quickly	Epistolary format, calls *e-mail*: letter
S4	Yes	Words	62	60	86
		Notes	No comment	No comment	No comment
S5	Yes	Words	34	73	107
		Notes	No comment	No comment	No comment
S6	Yes	Words	---	40	16
		Notes	Forwarded chain letter; not recorded as message	No comment	Sent same day as message 2

(table continues)

Appendix D

Table 1

Characteristics of the Data

Subject	*e-mail* Exp.	Descript	Messages 4	5	6
S1	No	Words	---	---	---
S2	No	Words	45	81	---
		Notes	No comment	No comment	---
S3	No	Words	86	104	45
		Notes	No comment	No comment	Written as a thank you note
S4	Yes	Words	82	---	---
		Notes	Answers sender's *e-mail* after being approached in computer lab	---	---
S5	Yes	Words	74	---	---
		Notes	Two weeks after previous message. Applies new vocabulary: questionnaire	---	---
S6	Yes	Words	83	---	---
		Notes	Answers sender's questions. Asks questions.	---	---

(table continues)

Appendix D

Table 1

Characteristics of the Data

Note. Dashes indicate that the subject did not submit an *e-mail*.

[a] Experience [b] Description

Appendix E

Table 2

Subordination and Connectors in the Data

	e-mail	Messages		
Subject	Exp	1	2	3
S1	No	...because this project is new to me.	---	---
S2	No	...that we meet....	...because this is the first e-mail....	...that you come to class today....
S3	No	...because I have the opportunity to learn....	---	...I hope you will receive....
S4	Yes	...that sometimes is very difficult for me....	...how difficult it is for me to have time....	...as you told me.... ...I do what you said.... ...after I put them to bed.
S5	Yes	...because I have to go to the college. ...at night I see you by e-mail.	...because with the chat I can receive the answers in the moment.	...when I am 15 years old.... ...bicause [sic] Uruguay had.... After, my family and I moved to US.... ...because the Consulate Americano doesn't give....
S6	Yes	---	...seen [sic] is one for a week....	...I hope we can be friend [sic] by mail....

(table continues)

Appendix E

Table 2

Subordination and Connectors in the Data

	e-mail	Messages		
Subject	Exp	4	5	6
S1	No	---	---	---
S2	No	...so I have time to writing.... ...becouse [sic] was not enough.... I hope today there is time.... ...bicouse [sic] shi [sic] is weiting [sic]	---	---
S3	No	---	---	I hope you will have a ....I hope I will see you....
S4	Yes	...how long you are planning.... ...because it is easier.... ...because I am having final exam.... ...what are we doing....	---	---
S5	Yes	...because I was very busy.... ...that's why can not talk....	---	---
S6	Yes	---	---	---